

# FORUM

*Internal Journal of  
the S.P.G.B.* — 6d.

No. 18

MARCH, 1954

## THE SENTIMENTAL ANARCHISTS

Forgive my calling you such names, Turner; a thousand pardons, A. A. N.—but really . . . First it was light-hearted fanciful stuff, agapemones in the air and craft-conscious Sylvies and Brunos; then the uninequality of man and the cult of non-violence; and now the Scout Law's call to the deep humanity in every man, no matter to what class the others may belong. Temporarily one is sorry about being a materialist; one wants to think of the joy in Valhalla—Kropotkin, Tolstoy, Moses Hess, Rousseau, Uncle Will Morris and all, heh-heh-hehing in their beards as their twopence-coloured utopias glow among the ashes and their noble mutual-aiding savages ride again in Clapham.

It was scarcely truthful of you, Turner, to call that article "A Criticism of the Election Address". It wasn't anything of the sort, really; it was a criticism of the Party. The election address was not very good—and the E.C. turned it down (after first turning down a real shocker from the Editorial Committee), and accepted it only when the circumstances seemed to say it was that or nothing at all. Some of us would almost have preferred nothing at all, and said so. Turner might have mentioned all this—only it isn't what he is concerned with. The address—however negatively, however leaden-footedly—stated the Party's case of opposition to other parties and its refusal to compromise with wage-labour-and-capital society; and that is the target of Turner's criticism.

And now we have the New Declaration of Principles, the twenty-five steps to the happy land. (Can we get there by candle-light? Yes—and back again.) How delightfully they are introduced: "the basic disagreements I have with some members". Who are "some members"? Oh, only the thousand who accept the Party's Principles.

Turner asks members to discuss his propositions; he asks, in effect, that they shall reconsider the validity of the Party Principles. He suggests that what was laid down in 1904 no longer meets the bill, and that the Party should break away from its funda-

mental pre-occupation with "economic groupings". A spectre haunts Turner and A. A. N.: the spectre of a nineteenth-century political cartoon where a bloated, cigar-sucking capitalist confronts a collarless, downtrodden-but-defiant prole. That is the image of the "orthodox" Party case as Turner's polemics represent it. See how eagerly A. A. N. snatches Judd's reference to hating: "quite commonly held by Party members", he rumbles. How many members really see it like that? Judd does, certainly, and a minority of others, I should say. This much, however, can be said for Judd's view: it's a caricature, but it caricatures a reality.

\* \* \*

The case for socialism, as I see it, is something like this. All property societies are bad for the propertyless people; objectively they are bad far the property-owners too, but it's like telling a sexual athlete that continence is beneficial. People live in particular forms of property societies; ours is capitalism, and the people it is bad for in a big way are the working people. It is bad for them first and foremost in that it gives insufficient food, clothing and shelter to a great many of them; it impedes the obtaining of either variety or depth of experience for most of them; it provides innumerable individual and social difficulties and frustrations. In addition, it has special problems for all the people some of the time (e.g., wars) and for some of the people all the time (e.g., racial minorities). Practically all working men and women are aware of these problems in much the way I have put them down; that is why they support anybody who appears likely to help them to a larger slice of the cake. Whatever else may come under "working class interests", this is the constant and the biggest one: to get much more and much better from living.

Is this what the Socialist Party is concerned with? Yes. Repeat, yes: getting more and better for the economic group to which almost all of us belong. The real

nature of our opposition to reforms, to the other parties, is that they cannot produce more and better for the working class in any sense worth talking about. As far as I know we have no other objection. A. A. N. says: "It is no function of the S.P.G.B., to instruct people (workers) as to their best method of obtaining more wealth". Well, if "socialist knowledge" included exclusive information of that sort, I shouldn't mind; are there really "best methods" of which people (workers) may be informed? I'll wait excitedly for A. A. N.'s next article—"You Too Can Have Mazuma Like Mine".

\* \* \*

It surprises me to read that "socialism is in the interest of every human being" comprises a "basic disagreement" with members. The Declaration of Principles says the same thing; I have no disagreement, nor has any other member I've come across (except that, as I understand Turner's case, it means we must wait for the last Hottentot after all). But it's a different thing from saying that "a socialist party makes a direct appeal to all human beings to think and act, as far as they can do today, as equals", or that "socialists do not talk, or write about, or organise for, Socialism as capitalists or workers". Capitalists stand to gain from Socialism, but different things; they have an interest involved in its establishment, but a different interest. "Worker or capitalist, prince or prostitute, black or white, Christian or atheist" . . . ah, it sounds wonderful; tell me, has anyone seen a human being stripped of the classifications and motives that the social environment imposes? A. A. N. say in big letters: "Within the S.P.G.B., all such classifications vanish". If you buy "Health and Efficiency" you'll read that the same thing happens in the buff, and it means just as much.

But what old stuff it all is! The "true socialists" of pre-1848 Germany had it to romantic perfection. And here is Keir Hardie, writing about it in the same year as

the S.P.G.B., was formed :

"I claim for the I.L.P., that its Socialism is above suspicion, and its independence unchallenged and unchallengeable; and yet in the platform speeches and in the writings of its leading advocates the terms 'class war' or 'class conscious' are rarely if ever used . . .

Now it is not disputed that there is a conflict of interests between those who own property and those who work for wages . . .

The object of Socialism is the removal of the causes which produce this antagonism, so that the human interest may at all times be the dominant one. The enlightened capitalist will be as anxious to bring this about as the enlightened workman. Both stand to gain from the change".

Plenty of others were saying it at the same time; "Left Bevanite" has been remarking in the "Socialist Leader" that it led them up some odd paths. No, I am not suggesting that Turner and A. A. N. are going Keir Hardie's way, though it might provide a smart answer—and a warning—to those who claim that the election address implied reformism.

Throw over concern with the class struggle, and there are two ways to go. One is the reformers', the Methodism-not-Marx way; the other is the non-political way. You don't want control of the powers of government, you don't want political theory. All you need is a change of heart: close your eyes tight, forget your grouping, shed its culture, and you'll feel the human interests surging through you. You and John Ellerman have

common cause; my missus and Lady Docker are sisters of the revolution.

The humanely interested are label-changers, asking to slap new tickets on the Socialist case. How shall we label them? Should it be a red label, or merely green? Turner and "Only Way" A. A. N. obviously regard themselves as "true socialists"; but how unfair it would be to call them that! Why, it was the name of a nineteenth-century sect which projected utopias for humanitarians. There seems only one possible description. Compound the faith in humanity and the repudiation of political action, what do we find? Sentimental anarchism . . . well, well, well; so that's what all the fuss is about.

R. COSTER.

and

## THE ANARCHISTS

At quite a number of our outdoor meetings members of the audience have asked speakers if we have anything in common with the Anarchists—or they have suggested that we and the Anarchists have a similar aim. Unfortunately, some speakers have not, in my opinion, dealt with these questions adequately. One prominent Party speaker has often said that if the questioner wants to call what we advocate "Anarchism" he does not mind. I think this attitude makes for confusion, and tends to give the impression that we and the Anarchists have much in common, that we have similar principles. I will endeavour to show that this is not so.

### PRINCIPLES AND DEMOCRACY

Although many of us in the S.P. may, and do, criticise certain aspects and tenets of our Declaration of Principles, we all accept the fact that the S.P.G.B., and its companion parties are the only organisations in the world that have a definite set of principles. The Anarchists have no principles at all. They are, and always have been, governed by expediency.

Take, for example, the Russian Revolution. From the beginning, the Socialist Party stated that this was a bourgeois revolution; that it would not emancipate the

workers of the Russian Empire from exploitation; that it would inevitably result in a class society. But not the Anarchists. The Anarchists, *all over the world*, supported the revolution and the Bolshevik dictatorship. Nowadays, like the Trotskyists, they say the revolution failed, it was betrayed. Alexander Berkman, the Russian Anarchist, supported both the February and October revolutions, and only later became disillusioned. But he admitted (*A.B.C. of Anarchism*) that the masses lacked both consciousness and definite purpose!

For Berkman, the revolution was O.K. until the Bolsheviks took over. But the following admission by Emma Goldman, another well-known Anarchist, should damn the Anarchists for ever. In *Trotsky Protests Too Much* (Published in Glasgow by the "Anarchist-Communist Federation" she wrote :

"During the four years civil war in Russia the Anarchists almost to a man stood by the Bolsheviks, though they grew more daily conscious of the impending collapse of the Revolution. They felt in duty bound to keep silent and to avoid everything that would bring aid and comfort to the enemies of the Revolution." (p.15)

When it suits them, Anarchists will support any form of government, democratic (?) or dictatorial.

It was not only during the first few years that the Anarchists supported the Communist government and its leaders. The following quotation from *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain*, by Felix Morrow shows to what depths Anarchists can sink:

"Above all, the great masses had not been prepared to understand the Stalinist system of frame-up and slander. Currying favor with Stalin, the Anarchist leaders had been guilty of such statements as that of Montseny: 'Lenin was not the true builder of Russia but rather Stalin with his practical realism'. The Anarchist press had preserved a dead silence about Moscow trials and purges, publishing only the official news reports. The C.N.T. (Anarchist "trade union") leaders even ceased to defend their Anarchist comrades in Russia. When the Anarchist, Erich Muehson was murdered by Hitler, and his wife sought refuge in the Soviet Union, only to be imprisoned shortly after her arrival, the C.N.T. leadership stifled the protest movement in the C.N.T. ranks. Even when the Red Generals were shot, the C.N.T. organs published only the official bulletins."

(*Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain*, p. 127-8)

\* \* \*

### DEMOCRACY AND VIOLENCE

Anarchists have always opposed democracy. In a debate with Comrade Turner at Denison House on Sunday March 1st, 1953, Philip Sansom, on behalf of the "London Anarchist Group", stated categorically that Anarchists opposed democracy. And in a letter to Comrade Young, published in FORUM, April 1953, the editors of *Freedom* (the Anarchist weekly) wrote "our paper *Freedom* does advocate minority action . . ." And was it not Emma Goldman who said "minorities are always right"?

The alleged object of Anarchists is Anarchy. Whilst Anarchists claim to be revolutionaries, many of them have been guilty of reformism and the support of capitalist-reform parties. Prince Peter Kropotkin, the Russian Anarchist, supported the first World War, and the Anarchist Rudolph Rocker supported the second, whilst the well-known Belgian Anarchist, G. Ernestan recently wrote:

"The rearmament of Western Europe is necessary, and the victory of the West in case of war is desirable; let us be frankly and sincerely with Truman."

(*Freedom* 1.3.52)

Anarchists maintain that their object is a free, co-operative, harmonious society, without government, state and capitalism (some Anarchists advocate the abolition of the wages system, whilst others support the ideas of Proudhon, with his "Peoples' Banks" and his peculiar theories on commodities and money).

Although some Anarchists are pacifists and refuse to defend violence, others defend violence under certain circumstances. Alexander Berkman, in his *A.B.C. of Anarchism*, writes:

"Yes, Anarchists have thrown bombs and have sometimes resorted to violence . . . under certain conditions a man may have to resort to violence. That man may happen to be a Democrat, a Monarchist, a Socialist, Bolshevik, or Anarchist . . . You will find that this applies to all men and to all times."

(p. 11)

and

"You see, then, that Anarchists have no monopoly of political violence. The number of such acts by Anarchists is

infinitesimal as compared with those committed by persons of other political persuasions.

The truth is that in every country, in every social movement, violence has been a part of the struggle from time immemorial. Even the Nazarene, who came to preach the gospel of peace, resorted to violence to drive the money changers out of the temple." (p. 13)

That the Anarchists are men of peace and opponents of war is not true. When it suits their purpose Anarchists will support war in the same way as Tories or Labourites. In Spain during the Civil War, Anarchists killed other workers (of course they were only Phalangists, Moors or Germans!) as did the Republicans and the Stalinists. Their activities in Spain confirm my statement that Anarchists are entirely lacking in principles. They are supposed to be opposed to war, but support it on occasions; they are supposed to oppose the vote and the ballot box, but have been known to vote in their millions; and are supposed to be opposed to government, and yet have joined and supported a bourgeois-liberal government in Spain.

### ANARCHISTS AND THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT

In the February, 1936 election in Spain the Anarchists, who had in the past abstained, voted for the Popular Front. The "left" parties increased their vote by about a million over the 1933 election. And D. A. Santillan admits that this can, to a great extent, be put down to the Anarchist vote. Santillan was a leading member of the "Anarchist Federation of Iberia" (F.A.I.), organiser of the anti-fascist Militias in Catalonia, and later an Anarchist minister in the Catalan government. In his book "Porque Perdimos la Guerra" he says: "We gave power to the Left parties, convinced that in the circumstances, they represented a lesser evil". We seem to have heard of this "lesser evil" argument before!

Afterwards, Anarchists entered both the Madrid and Catalan governments. On November 4th, four members of the C.N.T., entered the Caballero government. Of course most Anarchists in this country now condemn and disown their Spanish comrades. Some would like to forget Proudhon, others Bakounin, others Max Stirner.

\* \* \*

Although there are many other aspects in which we differ from the Anarchists—such as the Anarchists' cult of the individual, syn-

dicalism, and the like—I think I have shown that they have nothing in common with the socialist movement; that they, like the Tories, Stalinists, etc., have no principles, and are prepared to support any movement.

To those readers who are not conversant with Anarchism, I suggest the following books:—

"ANARCHISM AND SOCIALISM" by George Plechanoff.

(Chas. H. Kerr, Chicago)

"A.B.C. OF ANARCHISM" by Alexander Berkman.

(Freedom Press, 27 Red Lion Street, W.C.I.)

"THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM" by Sir Herbert Read.

"THE PLACE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY" by Emma Goldman.

For a brief account of Anarchism in Spain during the Civil War, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* by V. Richards (Freedom Press) is specially recommended. *Homenaje a Cataluña*, by George Orwell (Secker and Warburg) is also well worth reading.

PETER E. NEWELL.

**Correspondence and articles should be sent to FORUM, S.P.G.B., 52, Clapham High St., London, S.W. 4. Subscriptions 12 months, 7/6d, 6 months 3/9d. Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to: E. Lake, S.P.G.B.**

### CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors,

The contribution "Revisionism and Renegades in the S.P.G.B." (February) by Comrade D. W. Lock, is an attempt to use abuse in the place of argument. I have only two statements to make to Lock :

1. That if there is a continuation of the atmosphere created by the statements in Lock's article then all the useful discussion within the Party is at an end.

2. That I, for one, would welcome the opportunity to debate my views with those of Comrade Lock, and accordingly invite him to attend Central Office on a Saturday to be arranged.

A. W. L. TURNER.

### DON'T FORGET

**FORUMS ARE HELD AT H.O.  
EVERY SAT. EVENING**

## EDITORIAL

## RETROSPECT, 1952-3

Now that the storms of the earlier FORUM controversies have had time to abate, it is perhaps time to review and to make some assessment of them. Here it is not possible to mention all the issues that have been dealt with, but we hope that the selection, if arbitrary, is also representative.

\* \* \*

Evans' series on "The Nature of the Socialist Revolution" drew sharply divided comment. His return to FORUM (this issue) has been awaited with some interest.

Of the initial controversies, the ballot and election questions were fairly thoroughly dealt with in the earlier issues. The thornier trade union problem only reappeared later on and has still been incompletely stated. The four contributions on Heredity and Ability put some interesting points, but tended to lose relevance to the Party's propaganda, particularly in their later stages. The articles on mass production seemed to have had the effect of reducing the area of disagreement—a desirable effect not always achieved in controversy.

Discussion on backward countries left the last word with Hayden, yet opinions in the Party (and the Chapter in *Questions of the Day*) suggest that most of the points were scored by McClatchie. There were several articles on selectivity, but the original proposition that "some are more likely to be interested in our case than others" evoked no suggestion of how to use this knowledge. Later discussions centred around the concentration of propaganda. Also arising out of the selectivity question was a controversy over whether "People of the World—Unite!" was a valid socialist call.

Towards the end of 1953, the subject of violence was introduced, though it is doubtful whether it has yet been resolved to anyone's satisfaction. Rather better answered was the question "Are the Workers Better Off?" We do not think we show undue bias in saying that there are few who support Horatio's contention that if workers' conditions have improved then Socialism is out.

The year ended with the appearance of topics that are still being discussed, such as our attitude to class struggle and to parliament.

## IS SOCIALISM A WORKING CLASS ISSUE?

In our object and two of our principles, we recognise that all mankind is involved in the establishment of Socialism. The actual words are "in the interest of the whole community", "democratic control by the whole people" and "emancipation of all mankind".

It does not seem possible that we can propose common ownership of the means of life "in the interest of the whole community" without showing *how* this will be in the interest of all its members. Neither can we propose the emancipation, i.e. freeing from bondage, of all mankind unless we grant that all mankind is in bondage in some way.

The emancipation of all mankind must include the emancipation of members of the capitalist class. If the emancipation of the capitalist class is not envisaged, then Clause 4 of the D. of P. is, in the language of the authoritarians, being "repudiated".

If, however, Clause 4 is correct, then the capitalist class is also in bondage. And, in a sense, this is true! Its members are as much enslaved to property as the workers are. True, theirs may seem to be a pleasurable form of enslavement by comparison with the workers'. But neither workers nor capitalists are living under *socialist* conditions.

However much we may, as *workers*, envy the capitalists, we cannot do so from a socialist point of view. Socialism means a society based on the equal claims of all its members. It does NOT mean the working class getting the power and privileges that are now in the hands of the capitalist class—it means NO power and privilege. The Socialist Party cannot aim at making any section of society a ruling class or group, because that would preclude having Socialism.

There is sufficient 'unfinished business' from the past to occupy quite a bit of the future. For example, Evans' critics have held off, awaiting his conclusions; nobody has yet challenged in print the contention that "Socialism Will Benefit All"; and no attempt has been made to formulate an attitude to sex prejudice and the family. Many other matters await consideration. The debate continues . . .

Since some members hold that the change-over will consist in the working class becoming the dominant or ruling class, it seems that the explanation of what Socialism will be like is very necessary. Without agreement on the basic features of the society we propose, there can be no real agreement on the means that are to be used to bring it about.

## WHAT ARE INTERESTS?

Let us first try to clear up this question of "interests". What is meant by the statement "Socialism is in the interest of the working class"? It cannot mean that members of the working class think that it is "in their interest" to establish Socialism—because most of them obviously don't. The S.P.G.B.'s propaganda has been designed to get round this point by saying that workers, for various reasons, don't perceive what is in their true interest, i.e. they don't look at Socialism (as socialists do) as something more desirable than letting Capitalism go on.

This clearly reveals that whether people consider Socialism to be in their interest or not is *determined*, not by membership of a class but by the ideas they hold. I have stressed 'determined' because it is true that one's status within Capitalism is a *conditional* factor in one's acceptance of socialist ideas.

Yet socialist ideas are not confined to any group or class in society by *design*—only by chance. Thus there may now be no socialists in Albania, no yellow-skinned socialists, no socialists who are capitalists. But this is not because the people concerned are Albanian, yellow-skinned ar capitalists. *It is simply because they do not hold socialist ideas.*

Now, what does a socialist mean when he says the "Socialism is in my interest"? He doesn't mean "in my interest as a worker" because Socialism aims to abolish workers as a class. There must be some standards by which he measures his lot as a worker against that of a person living in socialist society. He cannot as a socialist measure his lot against that of a capitalist, because that would mean he would conceive his interest to be to become a capitalist. The only standards by which he can measure the present against the future he wants are those of HUMAN STATURE

Workers are not free to express themselves as human beings. Workers who are artists function primarily as capitalists. Where there are antagonisms of interest both antagonists are deprived of the conditions which only harmony can bring. A worker resents being paid *too little*. When he is a socialist he resents *having to be paid*. A capitalist resents taking too few profits. When he is a socialist he resents having to take profits. The reason for this is that all socialists share a conception of a society in which (among other things) human worth will cease to be valued in money terms.

#### BASIS OF UNDERSTANDING

In addressing audiences we do *not* address an abstraction called the working class. We speak to a group of people with all kinds of opinions, prejudices, religious differences, economic differences, etc. Who, then, are the working class? What are the problems

that face them? A better paid job, a better house or flat, will provide solutions to many of their problems. Such problems are not perceived as social ones; therefore the solutions are never really social, but are, at most, particular group solutions.

We call in vain for working-class unity for Socialism. Such unity is only obtained inside the Socialist Party. Inside the working class, the workers continue to jostle and push each other and to carry the capitalist class on their backs—complaining only of the load, never questioning its right to be there.

To seek, therefore, a common basis of understanding is to hold the "mirror of life" under present conditions for all non-socialists to see. It is to show that there is a way out of the present social set-up, that there is a possibility of harmonious relationships in a society designed to encourage human development, not to frustrate it.

Saying that Socialism is primarily a question of class struggle, inviting questions on whether we are better or worse off than 50 years ago—in fact the whole negative approach in our propaganda must be balanced with the idea of a positive proposition of the society which is our object. Not in the dual sense of destruction and reconstruction, but as a process of development, with the elements of dissolution on the one hand, and of growth on the other.

The basis of membership of the Socialist Party is acceptance of socialist ideas—it is not membership of a class in society. Socialism is NOT "helping to raise the working class to the position of ruling class". It is the society that people who are socialists will bring about, not people who are workers. It is not a capitalist class issue, neither is it a working class issue.

G. HILBINGER.

## A POLICY ON SOCIALISM

Stripped of verbiage, D'Arcy's "Socialism, Utopian and Philosophical" boils down to these points:

1. "All people, given similar economic circumstances, can understand Socialism, the point is do they all have to as A.A.N. claims"?

Why the qualification "similar economic circumstances?" The onus is on D'Arcy to show in what economic circumstances some people *cannot* understand Socialism.

2. "The issue in the class struggle is one of property, either in degree (Trade Unions) or as a whole (common ownership)."

Common ownership (i.e. no ownership) abolishes property "as a whole." There are no degrees in property, which consists in relationships that are either supported or opposed. Therefore Trade Unions cannot abolish property "in degree", nor can anyone else.

3. "Labour, Communist, I.L.P., Trotskyists, etc., have not analysed Capitalism accurately or adequately—that is our criticism of them."

Our main criticism of other parties is not their analysis of Capitalism, but that they do not work for Socialism.

4. "Socialism means the emancipation of the working class economically; capitalists are already economically emancipated, therefore common ownership for them is, at

best, an academic issue instead of a dire necessity. In any event, capitalists who are in favour of Socialism automatically identify themselves with the working class interests. If there is to be any foundation in the argument, we must use the word 'interests' economically."

Capitalists are *not* already economically emancipated in the way that Socialism will emancipate all mankind. Socialism in a dire necessity only for socialists, not for workers or capitalists. On D'Arcy's own showing that class interests are economic, no capitalist can identify himself with working class interests.

5. "When Socialism is established nobody will know what it will look like, neither will anyone care apart from some S.P.G.B.'ers."

In every social system the people "know what it looks like". With Socialism the majority will care, not just some S.P.G.B.'ers. D'Arcy's reference to 'establishment' can only mean a legal enactment of Socialism, to be followed later by new social conditions—i.e. he envisages a transition period. This is the inevitable result of refusing to discuss what Socialism will be like until it comes.

6. "The present writer hasn't a clue, like millions of others; he will accept the insurance policies of democratic control and common ownership, which is all the Party offers, and with these two ingredients re-create the world."

The first statement is indisputable. 'Democratic control and common ownership' is *not* all the S.P.G.B., offers. Labour Communist, I.L.P., etc., all offer to "re-create the world" with these vague ideals. When Socialism comes (and assuming that D'Arcy is still alive and analysing) he will find there is much more to it than that. He should remember that insurance policies have small print and go into some detail—what he wants can be written on a due stamp.

\* \* \*

D'Arcy says he is waiting patiently for other members to take the initiative in formulating a policy on what Socialism will look like. But he has already decided that "there is nothing to know". No headway can be made while members think like this. He must see that it cuts no ice to say "A.A.N. has not put the Party case"—nor is it good enough just to state what the Party case is or is not. The only criterion for fruitful discussion within the S.P.G.B., (or anywhere) is are the arguments sound?

S. R. P.

March 9th is the closing date for April contributions. It facilitates the publication if they can be sent in before that date, and typed with double spacing.

## THE NATURE OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

### 6 — *The Ideological Reflection*

These articles are an amplification of the first one. The next (concluding) section will suggest the possibility of construing Socialism out of the movement of Capitalism (the starting point, perhaps, of a fresh discussion). This section meanwhile draws attention to the limitations of propaganda and suggests that so far we have made the worst of a hard job.

A dance is a conventional pattern of movements traced out by the dancers' feet, woven between people who cross, turn and bow. When the music stops, no physical pattern remains, carved out in solid air, yet it does remain, for it can be repeated at will. It remains in the dancers' heads, when thought about (given a name). But it exists also in their feet, as learned (habitual) sequences of reflexes triggered off by the name.

Society is a structure of dance patterns, woven between people, the steps built up of the reflex conventions of everyday life into the distinguishable dances we name institutions—dances called by the tune of organised labour. The patterns exist in men's heads, and in the flesh and blood as habits unconsciously learned and socially compulsive. We give them names ('ideas', 'thinking'), and give names to aggregations of names ('ideologies', 'outlooks'). If we ask how, by what intermediate processes, the mode of labour determines ideologies, we fox ourselves with a question wrongly stated. Modes of production are ideologies (habits thought about and labelled).

Bodily activity induces a moistening of the skin, sweat. It produces also another kind of sweat—'thoughts'. No tribe (probably) deifies perspiration, worships it as a separate power, and calls it the engine of the world. But this is how we regard the moist glisten of mind called 'thinking', unless we know it's only sweat. The skin is a protective covering, a heat regulator, and an overflow outlet for the end-products of activity; so is thinking. Both are skin deep—especially the notion that "I work because I sweat".

Still, we are rational beings. We preconceive our ends. We think what we're about. We look before we leap. We decide. And part of our confusion on this matter of being giving the name 'idea' indiscriminately to everything from the elemental percept of the aware that we think and feel comes from senses to the vast complex of a whole man's whole relation to the whole world which is the ideology. An outlook, moreover, is more

than a 'large' idea, or a bundle of ideas. An idea is a man's thought; an ideology is a man thinking. Christianity, Socialism, or the like, is the verbal formulation of a human soul, the skin glistening with the last evocation of its agitation. We may argue about ideologies, but you can't argue with them. There is no reason about being what we are, and whoever is defeated in a logical clash of antlers can only grow new antlers from his flesh to preserve his flesh. 'Ideas' in this sense can be exchanged only between those whose ideas are already akin.

This we know, more or less, but what of it anyway? What can the socialist do but talk socialism?

Suppose we also concede that the herd instinct, the supreme sanction of outlawry, makes it very embarrassing to sing out of tune, and that the revolutionary outlook is the most dissonant—still, what other tune can we sing?

#### DISARMING THE OPPOSITION

There is another difference between the idea and the ideology: one looks forward, the other backward. The idea looks forward because survival depends on awareness, not simply of the actual present situation, but of the immediate future contained in it. The idea (at the simpler, sensory level here implied) anticipates. Otherwise we could never cross the road or catch a ball. The present is perceived in motion, and its speed and direction continued in the mind's eye, the arc projected, the graph extrapolated. So the lightning catch is held or the traffic cheated.

The ideology, on the other hand, is an accumulation of past experience, which takes time to organise in the mind. By the time it has digested into the coherence of verbal formulation it lags behind the current situation, more especially as it is formulated through the medium of earlier generations' concepts and yardsticks, accepted in innocence and taken for granted. An outlook is always more or less behind the times, and only by practising, in the larger realm of ideology, of interpretation of the world, the anticipation which is instinctive at the simpler level of perception; that is, to keep our eye, not on the ball, but on its motion; to observe the historical movement of society and project that movement.

The reason for drawing attention to the oneness of labour and thinking and institu-

tions and production and all the things we separate for the purpose of labelling; to the social instinct of men which makes revolution innately unacceptable; to the utter continuity of history; to changes which have taken place in capitalism since the Communist Manifesto was written, and in the Party since the D. or P. was drawn up; to Marx's political C.P.'ism which our socialism has not yet out-grown; to our half-hearted acceptance of social determinism, our unintegrated grammar of history, and the idealism which grins over the shoulder of our materialism—the reason for this is to shake loose some of the resistance, and to give some background to the view that the 'socialist idea' attains its (residual) power to hasten socialist society in proportion as we recognise that idea as an evolving symptom of an evolving society whose own necessary motions spell Socialism.

Hitherto, we have conceived the 'socialist idea' as separating itself from capitalism in opposition to it: now, under pressure of actual social change, we begin to see that idea, and its changes, as a sign of the socialism which capitalism is compelled to produce. In this way it becomes a more powerful agent of the social process, for it means that we become aware not simply of the world but of its movement, and are compelled progressively to discover an objective, socially inhering, necessity for Socialism.

If we can point to this inhering necessity, we sidestep most of the difficulty of revolutionary propaganda. The propaganda which opposes the world only confirms itself in isolation. If, instead of entering the field of political action determined to wage war, we draw attention to the socialism being hustled along by capitalism, we disarm the opposition which opposition kindles. If we go bald-headed at workers' heads, tell them the world won't change until they change, place the onus on them ("now when you're ready, oysters dear, we can begin to feed"), our offensive against capitalism becomes little more than offensive. If instead we show socialism as the end of a road already being trod, we assert their and our common participation in it. If we can show it as having a necessity outside men's wishes, and therefore binding on all, we make an ally of the social instinct. If, on the one hand, ideologies are invulnerable, on the other hand the objective world is irrefutable.

## WE CAN CONSTRUCT SOCIALISM

We all agree that capitalism produces socialists, but we are not all agreed what this means. It is generally held that capitalism produces socialists out of revolt against its miseries, assisted by socialists as they organise themselves. This is the prevailing theme, with minor variations: that the socialist should address the most likely converts (conceived as occupational groups or as layers of intelligence), or should attend more to the psychological technique of propaganda, or should concentrate on giving a positive and concrete description of the society at which he aims. They are reasonable variations on the commonsense theme that socialists, wanting socialism, must organise propaganda to gain consent for it.

The variation these articles propose is the need to recognise that capitalism itself moves towards socialism, and that this is the reason why it produces socialists, out of the elements of socialism necessarily developed by capital (for instance, democracy, equality, plenty—but by no means only these) and still being

developed. The power of socialist propaganda as an agent of social change lies in this acknowledgement.

The objection that this removes the need for propaganda applies equally to the miseries and contradictions of capitalism. Equally, the enlargement of necessity contained in this proposition still includes the need by socialists to talk socialism. More crucial is the objection that it does away with the revolution. But it does away with the revolution too simply as a single act, the better to proclaim the certainty of socialism as a social fact. The view put forward here is that there is no proof of the pudding like the smell of the cooking, and that a socially inhering necessity for Socialism, objectively demonstrable in the motions of capitalism, is more convincing than our most rational wishes or fearful warnings.

Soon after Newton, some materialist philosopher said, "Give me matter, and I will construct the universe", soon again to be capped by another who said, "Give me motion, and I will construct the universe".

And to-day sociological research has moved so far from the descriptive level of Grimm and Maine that it now strains against the barrier of our own uncouth materialist grammar. But the banns have been read—just in time. Our exposure of the exploitative relations between the buyers and sellers of the m. of p.—the analysis of particles within a closed system of their fixed orbits—is a dead duck to the heirs of Darwin and Marx and Einstein, who gave us motion out of dynamo and rocket and the transmutation of the elements.

The particulate analysis of a dead capitalism on which we must breathe to make it move has the lively attractiveness of the jointed wooden toys of yesterday that don't go by themselves. Inhering motion is the major premiss of our time. There is a queasy consciousness of speed, without knowledge of direction. The world is asking itself out loud "where is it all leading to?". And there is a kingdom offered to prince or poor man who will answer truly.

Given motion, we can construct Socialism.  
F. EVANS.

## THE MAKING OF HUMANITY

Robert Briffault, Allen & Unwin, 12/6d.

The central theme of this book concerns the battle of custom and power-thought against rational thought, and the development of the latter, especially in relation to morality. Articles in the *Socialist Standard* (Jan. and Feb. 1953) have already discussed custom- and power-thought and outlined the role of rational thought in the development of socialist ideas. It is necessary here, perhaps, only to recall that custom-thought is summed up in the phrase "it is done thus" (the possibility of anything new just doesn't enter in); that power thought arises with the development of property over society, when power over men's minds replaces power over tools; and that rational thought is man's process of acquiring efficiency in dealing with his environment by securing correspondence between his thoughts and the actual relation and sequence of events—a refinement of 'trial and error'.

Parts III and IV of the book are concerned with The Evolution of Moral Order and Preface To Utopia, and here I shall touch upon what appear to me to be the main topics in them.

\* \* \*

Nowhere is the falsification of power thought more profound than in the sphere of ethical values. The existing absolute and

coercive morality of property society is nothing but a man-made convention. It is concerned with 'judging' actions with reference to punishment or reward, blame or praise. Yet it is not what men do, knowing it to be bad and wicked, but what they do, considering it to be highly moral, which is answerable for most injustice:

"The foes of humanity have not been men of bad intentions—bad men; they have been purely and simply men who have held wrong, that is, irrational opinions. Torquemada . . . was a 'good man'; he loved humanity, he was animated, not by any personal and selfish motives, but by a perfervid sense of duty; he roasted alive ten thousand men and women with the sincere purpose of benefiting them and the human race."

The real evil-doer is some opinion, some intellectual absurdity. No lie can manage to be inoffensive. If it has power it will be bloody and murderous. All power wielded by man over man is an aggression. That power, the object of human competition, seeks the profit of the strong at the cost of the weak; all power encroaches on equity, is unjust, oppressive.

On the other hand, morality is characterised by the ideas of injustice, which postulates

the equal claim of all individuals. This, in turn, rests upon the repudiation of all claims to privileged conduct and privileged dealing. Justice is not merely a cry of the weak for protection; it is the rational call of the paramount interests of the human race. And justice is the whole of morality. It is simply the negation of wrong, of injustice. It demands that there shall be no despotic oppression, no violence done by man to man (Briffault says "no arbitrary violence", but the non-arbitrary variety is equally as inexcusable) and that in his life, his activity, his thought, man shall not be tyrannised over by man by virtue of power, privilege, (factitious and false) authority.

The 'moralists' complain that the foundations of morality are being sapped by rational criticism. What they really mean is that the motive of (heavenly) reward, of future life, is destroyed. Religion's role of teaching man to make the best of things is jeopardised. They still press upon us the old remedy 'Reform yourselves and the world will be reformed'. But morality progresses not by the reformation of the individual, but by the reformation of the world's thought. Moral progress does not consist in conformity with the ethical ideals of the age, but in the detection of the immorality of those ideals.

The physical force wielded by oppressors has mostly been that lent to them by the loyalty of their victims through the power of intellectual and moral theories. The

oppressed have only revolted against tyranny or injustice, however atrocious, when they have perceived it as irrational and false.

"It is that purely intellectual process of enlightenment and criticism which is the indispensable condition of the protest of the oppressed. Until it has taken place their ethical conceptions are as immoral as those of their oppressors; their veneration, their bowing submission to the divinely appointed order, their contentment with the station in which Providence has placed them, are the counterpart of the ruthless injustice, the tyranny, the rapacity, the cruelty, the barbarity of the holders of power."

If we accept this analysis, then we must seriously question whether it is rational to appeal any differently to the members of one group or class to think in terms of no classes, from the way in which we appeal to those of any other group or class . . .

\* \* \*

Briffault goes strangely "off the rails" in dealing with leaders and dirty work. The following passages seem to be out of harmony with the rest of the book:

"Natural inequality, aristocracies of talent, of wisdom, of true insight, let us by all means pray for; let us have leaders. But to offer high wages for leadership is precisely the way *not* to get it. Given

decent fulness of life to all, it is your true leader that can best dispense with high wages. The true difficulty . . . is not so much to allot leadership as to allot the dirty work . . . To preserve human beings from becoming brutes when put to the dirty work of the world, that is the greater difficulty. To them the high wages."

This is reminiscent of the Leninist conception of leadership, but goes further—instead of equal wages for all, the high wages will go to the doers of "dirty work", not to the leaders! Even if we grant that such unlikely conditions could ever obtain, they would not allow free access to what is produced, but must involve the privileges and unequal claims of individuals, against which Briffault elsewhere inveighs so effectively.

In the concluding chapters we find sentiments which clearly show the influence of Marxism, which the author earlier explicitly acknowledges:

"The length of our individual tether, our capacity for going maybe a little beyond the expressed thought of the age, is itself determined by the stage of evolution which we happen to have reached . . . the growth of humanity has so far been engaged rather with developing the means of its evolution than with using and applying them. The goals which humanity at present envisages are not so much ideals

of ripe perfection—which does not exist in any evolutionary process—as a condition of suitable equipment for its free development."

The interesting theory is advanced that in the world's population today every phase of human evolution is represented, from the Stone Age onward. They do not settle their disputes with stone hatchets, but in all that counts in human evolution—their ideas—some people appertain to a primitive period. It is no incurable 'human nature' that is at fault, but the failure of society to transmit the products of human evolution to all its members.

The book concludes with a plea for such a transmission by education—"The imparting to every being of the means and methods of rational thought." The author's concept of the future is, however, tinged with the Communist Party ideas that he was later to take up (it includes nations, share of work, etc.). Despite this, his explanation and advocacy of the triumph of rational thought over custom- and power-thought stands on its own merits. If he chose to speak of transmitting rational idea to the next generation, it was probably because he despaired of overcoming the difficulties of spreading them to *this* generation. And therein lies the basic difference between such as Briffault and the S.P.G.B.

S. R. P.

seconds to spare. It often speaks paragraphs, as the owners of the capitalist press know quite well.

Other ideas that strike me as worthy of attention are such items as reports of debates (suitably parsed), and a reversion to the old habit of inserting a socialist quotation in every issue.

It is somewhat significant that, whilst at one time there were frequent critical and controversial letters from non-socialists printed in the 'S.S.', we no longer see them. It is because non-socialists no longer buy the paper—or that they have effectively been shut up?

To sum up, when one turns over the pages of the 'S.S.' one absorbs working-class history, and is rather proud of the sustained efforts gone into its making. As one who has only recently become a member of the Party, I would suggest to other new members that they read the back issues of our paper and glean in a comfortable manner those things created, often in the face of discomfort and toil, by old members living and dead.

W. BRAIN.  
Swansea Branch.

## THE S.S. — Comments and Suggestions

The time is long overdue for someone to survey the activities of the Party from the early days to the present time. Whilst there are undoubtedly many sources for carrying out this research, one of the most helpful and important is the files of the 'S.S.'

I have been engaged recently in reading back numbers of the 'S.S.', and it has given me much pleasure in forming even a little picture of our journal over the last 12 months. I append my findings, together with comments and suggestions.

It will be seen that a most interesting and worthwhile task awaits the member who gets down to presenting a record of activities and propaganda covering the lifetime of our Party, as expressed in the columns of the 'S.S.' and elsewhere.

During the twelve months Oct. 1952—Sept. 1953, the 'S.S.' published 131 articles, excluding editorial features. The year's publication was well spiced with contributions relative to topical events. There were five historical articles and six instructively humorous articles. The book reviews

were a regular feature, and it is obvious that the comrade responsible for them put in a great deal of critical reading.

One felt that the series on "Religion" (still continuing), whilst being sound enough, is somewhat old-fashioned and out of place. Why should we continue to make an issue of this when most thinking people (including non-socialists) have dropped it? One feels that the able pen of Comrade Jarvis could be put to better use.

Of the other methods of propaganda and instruction we were rather poorly served; e.g. there were only two cartoons and no poetry worth mentioning. There is no reason why we cannot press these two art forms into our service far more often than we do. A perusal of the pages of the 'S.S.' of the 'twenties' shows that poetry was used quite frequently.

Regarding the cartoon—the working class of today is a class in a hurry; it has been speeded up in its masters' cause. The cartoon is a symbolic message, speeded up to catch the eye of the reader with a few